



Concordia  
UNIVERSITY

## The Eric O'Connor Series III

### THE WORD MADE FLESH?

# *Re-Shaping Our City*

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

*The Word: Poetry & Prose of the City*

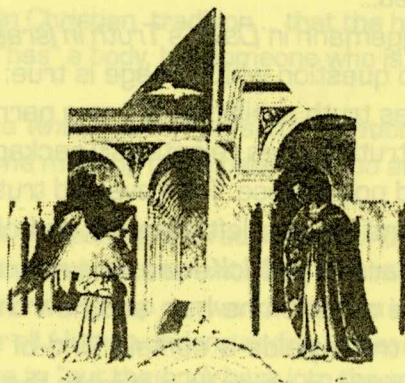
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

*Media Re-Visions: Our City & Our World*

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

*Urbanoscope: Our Dwelling Place – Reclaiming It*

The Loyola Chapel – 7:30 p.m.



Sponsored by:

Concordia Campus Ministry, The Department of Theological Studies, The Loyola  
Jesuit Community, The Audio-Visual Department and The Department of  
Communication Studies

Here are a few reflections to help you enter into the spirit of this year's events...

## IN THE BEGINNING...

God said **Let there be light**, and there was light (Genesis 3)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. [John 1].

This is the eternal origin of art that a human being confronts a form that wants to become a work through him. Not a fragment of his soul but something that appears to the soul and demands the soul's creative power. What is required is a deed that a man does with his whole being: if he commits it and speaks with his being the basic word to the form that appears, then the creative power is released and the work comes into being.

The deed involves sacrifice and a risk... The risk: the basic word can only be spoken with one's whole being;...

Martin Buber, *I and Thou*.

Two scripture scholars characterize David as either a bloodthirsty, oversexed bandit (John McKenzie) - whereas Samuel Terrien can say "The purity of David's faith assumed a quality of elegance which has often gone unnoticed..."

Walter Brueggemann in *David's Truth in Israel's Imagination and Memory* goes on to question which image is true:

"...the Bible makes truth available only as a narrative, even if we want more. The truth comes relentlessly packaged in ambiguity, inscrutability and polyvalence. The revealed truth is always continually hidden and we are left amazed and chagrined. If one follows the scholarship of McKenzie, one may understand why each has put the question he has, and how the putting of the question of the truth yields a certain kind of answer. So our purpose in exposition is never to eliminate the hiddenness, for that is to want to know too much. Such analysis that leaves nothing to the imagination is indeed pornographic."



Should not Israel, people of the Book, for whom the required reading of the Scriptures belongs to the most solemn liturgy, also be the people of continued revelation?

But if this is so, language that contains more than it contains would be the natural element of inspiration, in spite of or prior to its being reduced to its usefulness in transmitting thoughts and information (if it is ever entirely reduced to that). One might ask whether the human being, the animal endowed with language, is not above all the animal capable of inspiration, the prophetic animal. One can ask whether the book, as a book, before becoming a document, is not the modality in which *what is said* offers itself to and calls for exegesis – whether its meaning, immobilized within its characters, is not already tearing at the text that contains it. In propositions that are not yet – or are no longer – verses, and are often only radiant phrases, there reverberates *another voice*, a second sonority that drowns out or tears apart the first. The vast life of texts that survive through the lives of the men and women who hear them...

Emmanuel Levinas *The Jewish Understanding of Scripture*  
(in *Crosscurrents*)

L'art en revenant à ses origines nous aide à rester hommes; il nous rend le sens du concret, le sens des métaphores qu'implique le concret; il rouvre pour nous le chemin qui mène à l'existence profonde; il rend plus épaisse, plus sensible, moins abstraite et purement fonctionnelle notre présence à la vie et à nous-mêmes; il nous aide à *exister*.

Jean Animus, *Reflexions Sur L'Art*

...the body's meaning in Christian tradition ... that the human person is not simply someone who "has" a body, but someone who is a body.

...The body is the *whole human person* in relation to God, world and others. It is the supreme meeting place between God and humanity.

"Any adequate account of meaning and rationality," writes philosopher Mark Johnson, "must give a central place to embodied and imaginative structures of understanding by which we grasp our world." Reason is not purely abstract and transcendent after all. Human understanding is *incarnate*; hence it is the task of modern science to "put the *body* back into the *mind*".

As Karl Rhaner wrote... "The Ascension is a festival of the future of the world ... for the Lord has risen forever. We Christians are, therefore, the most sublime of materialists..."

As scholars like Peter Brown have demonstrated, theology's emphasis on the body's intrinsic worth liberated it from the claims of the *polis* (that it is, from utilitarian control by the state, by cultural or sociopolitical forces):

...the body's integrity is strictly God-given and intrinsic; it is not an "entitlement" granted by the state or erected by religious authority.

Nathan D. Mitchell, *Who Is at the Table?* (**Commonweal**)

There is a special regard almost akin to reverence for speech and for truth. Perhaps it was because words bear the tone of the speaker and may therefore be regarded as belonging to that person; perhaps it is because words have but a fleeting momentary existence in sound and are gone except in memory; perhaps it is because words have not ceased to exist but survive in echo and continue on in infinity; perhaps it is because words are medicine that can heal or injure; perhaps it is because words possess an element of the *magical* that enabled them to conjure images and ideas out of nothing.

Basil H. Johnston, *One Generation from Extinction*

Were you scared, unsure?  
In the beginning?  
Are we the words you fill your pages with?

Endre Farkas, *O God*

We rummage for words to rub together  
to start a fire, to keep warm;  
for words that would be bright enough  
to convince ourselves that days go by  
for some important reason  
and embrace  
because of some revelation.

Endre Farkas, *Imagine*



## JULIE BRUCK

Julie Bruck lives in Montreal, where she works as an arts publicist and freelance writer. She is a graduate of Concordia University and Warren Wilson Program for Writers. Her poems have appeared in such magazines as *The Malahat Review*, *Denver Quarterly* and *The New Yorker*, have been broadcast on CBC RADIO and NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO, and have been recorded for a forthcoming spoken-word compact disc anthology from Virgin Records/EMI. She received a 1992 fellowship from the MacDowell Colony and was shortlisted for National Magazine Awards in 1993 and 1994. Her first book, *The Woman Downstairs*, was published by BRICK BOOKS in 1993 and shared QSPELL's A.M. Klein Award for Poetry in 1994.

## P. SCOTT LAWRENCE

P. Scott Lawrence, a LaSalle resident, received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from Concordia University, where he is now a part-time instructor in undergraduate creative writing workshops. His short stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies including *Telling Differences New English Fiction from Québec*, *Exile*, *Matrix* and *32 Degrees*, and have been broadcast on CBC Radio's "Between the Covers" and "Morningside" programs. His nonfiction credits include *Look Again: A Guide to the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography*. He is the editor of *Souvenirs: New English Fiction from Quebec* and the author of the short-story collections *Around the Mulberry Tree* and *Missing Fred Astaire* (Véhicule Press, 1993), which won QSPELL's Hugh MacLennan Prize for Fiction in 1993.

## HARRY STANDJOFSKI

Harry Standjofski, a graduate of Concordia University where he has taught, is an actor, musician and playwright living in Montreal. He is a regular on Radio-Canada's TV series *A Nous Deux*. Among his plays are *Noh Cycle*, *In the Moon* and *Anton*. His work has been seen, in both official languages, across the country. He is a founding member of the Association of Producing Artists and a founding artistic associate of POV PRODUCTIONS, a Montreal company whose mandate is the production of new English works. His book *Urban Myths* was published by NU AGE EDITIONS. The play *Promise* was produced by POV in 1993.



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CAMPUS MINISTRY is a unit of *Advocacy & Support Services, Student Services.*

The organizers of the The Eric O'Connor Series would like to say a special word of thanks to the Concordia Library for the loan of The Book of Kells which we have had on display throughout the series.

